



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2024 Volume I: Myth, Legend, Fairy Tale

---

## **Introducing Elements of Fiction through Myths, Fables, and Fairy Tales**

Curriculum Unit 24.01.01, published September 2024  
by Cheryl Bardoe

### **Rationale**

---

I teach language arts for seventh and eighth grades at a preK - grade 8 magnet school in New Haven. Many of the students in our grade band are below grade-level in reading and writing. Scores show this situation will likely continue for several years as students continue to rebound from educational disruptions relating to the pandemic. Many of our students are multilingual learners, and some are identified with learning differences. Many students are still building stamina for reading lengthy texts. Using myths and fairy tales, this project outlines an anchor unit for the beginning of the year to introduce core strategies and literary elements that students will use to unpack texts throughout the school year.

Having come to teaching after a career as a professional writer, including publishing award-winning children's books, I bring a deep understanding of how we use the power of narrative to organize, analyze, and connect information. The students in my classes already encounter a daily deluge of texts, delivered in a variety of traditional and digital formats, created for a multitude of audiences and purposes. To participate in this exchange of ideas now and in the future, they must develop a facility for evaluating and interpreting texts, purposefully seeking out texts, and creating texts themselves. One strategy I can offer them as a teacher is to cultivate a deep understanding of the power of story. Our brains are hardwired to respond to narrative stories as a way to organize, connect, and analyze information and as a way to influence and exchange information with others. If students understand how stories work, they will be better prepared to think critically about the stream of information they encounter and become more effective communicators themselves.

By offering a series of short texts, this unit will welcome students back to school with high-interest stories that can be read quickly and analyzed efficiently. Students will explore four core elements of fiction—character, setting, plot, and theme. Using myths, fables, and fairy tales will make it possible for students to analyze the impact of these elements on a complete story and to easily compare multiple texts. This repetition will emphasize how these building blocks are common across narrative forms and will promote student confidence as we move on to analyze these elements in longer, more complex texts. In addition, this unit will bring students together as a learning community with a shared experience that can be referred back to throughout the year. As we add more concepts throughout the year, we can easily revisit these short texts that students

know well, so they can first apply new ideas to familiar texts.

To reflect the diversity of student backgrounds in these classes, the texts for this unit will offer stories from a variety of cultures, including tales from Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. Classroom conversations will explore the values and perspectives reflected in the tales. This unit will also include contemporary short stories that relate to myths and fairy tales—perhaps through allusion, format, or use of magic. Making links between older and contemporary forms of literature will increase the relevance of this unit to students’ lives. Students may be able to draw on the enjoyment of classic tales from when they were younger to find more literature to enjoy today. Connecting contemporary literature to a broader framework also shows students how universal the narrative lens is, and that we can learn from studying the craft and purpose of almost any story.

## Objectives and Unit Overview

---

The essential questions of this unit will be:

- Why do humans need story?
- How are stories built?
- Why are some stories told and retold again and again?
- Why do stories change?
- How can I build engaging stories?
- What role does magic play in stories?

The act of storytelling is as old as humankind and is essential to both the development of civilization and the modern experience. Humans use stories to remember the past, imagine possible futures, reflect on ourselves, make connections with other people, communicate ideas, and broaden our perspective on the world. By offering students historical context about the use of stories, teachers can frame our English Language Arts content as being on a continuum of storytelling and part of a core aspect of human existence. We can “geek out” about the power of story in an authentic way and lend our enthusiasm to help students notice and seek out the presence of story in their own lives.

Although this unit could be taught at any time, it is designed as the first major unit and will emphasize establishing learning strategies and classroom routines that will be used throughout the year. This includes annotating nonfiction and fiction, recording responses in student notebooks, collaborating with peers, and writing paragraphs supported by text evidence. Using short texts to introduce these techniques will allow students to work with whole texts and repeat these skills across multiple texts in a relatively short span of time. The pacing of this unit is designed for 90-minute class blocks that meet daily; it is anticipated to be about four weeks.

The second half of the unit will offer students an opportunity to write their own myth, fable, or fairy tale. Applying the concept of “reading like writers,” students will use the texts they read as models for creating their own texts.

At the end of the unit, students will understand that:

- Story is something that connects humans across time, geography, and culture,
- Character, setting, plot and theme are core elements in narrative stories.
- Stories communicate values, ideas, and perspectives,
- Engaging with narrative stories activates our brains in meaningful ways,
- People use story as a vehicle to learn, to cultivate empathy, to be creative, and to communicate with others.

At the end of the unit, students will have practiced the following skills:

- Using academic vocabulary to describe specific types of stories.
- Using two guiding questions to deepen their engagement with nonfiction text,
- Recognizing common signposts used for interpreting fiction text,
- Identifying text evidence to interpret aspects of character, setting, plot, and theme,
- Writing paragraphs with text evidence to answer questions,
- Identifying key turning points in the plot of a story,
- Planning out the plot of a narrative story,
- Writing an “exploded moment” to pull readers into a fictional story.

At the end of the unit, students will have practiced the following classroom procedures:

- Making entries in their Readers & Writers Notebooks,
- Collaborating with peers in pairs and small groups to explore discussion prompts and develop shared products,
- Exchanging work with peers and providing feedback,
- Sharing their learning with the class to expand the community’s knowledge.

Students will continue to develop these understandings and skills throughout the year.

## Teaching Strategies

---

### Reading Fiction

This unit leans heavily on the “signposts” that are identified by educational researchers Kylene Beers and Robert E. Probst. In *Notice & Note: Strategies for Close Reading*, these authors identify six story events that appear in every fiction genre and which students can use to help interpret text. This approach is valuable because it gives young readers a targeted focus for their reading and annotations. Starting a new story can make any reader feel disoriented. Suddenly, just by the act of opening the book (or the screen) we are expected to embrace unknown characters, settings, and conflicts. This expectation can feel even more overwhelming for emerging readers who struggle to sound out and identify the meanings of words. Beers and Probst refined their list of signposts based on the criteria of being easy to notice, showing up frequently, and offering young readers a hook to relate stories to their own real-life and reading experiences. As the authors explain, “We don’t read for the conscious purpose of finding and labeling a connection; rather, as we read, something in the text triggers a memory or causes us to make a connection...and then we explore the significance of that interaction.”<sup>1</sup> Once students have built mastery in noticing the six identified signposts, they will have the skills to recognize other literary patterns and expand their tool kit.

The six signposts identified by Beers and Probst are called: Words of the Wiser, Again and Again, Contrasts and Contradictions, Aha Moments, Tough Questions, and Memory Moment. In this unit, students will begin by working two signposts as they analyze a fable and fairy tale. We will start with Words of the Wiser, which describes story events in which one character gives meaningful life advice to another character, most often the protagonist. The second starter signpost will be Again and Again, which describes an image, word, or situation that is repeated, with growing significance in the story. Working just two signposts and with short texts will help students learn to recognize these signposts more quickly because they can use the whole story to interpret their meaning and they can read several stories in short succession to practice looking for the signposts. At the end of the unit, students will review the rest of the signposts so that they have the complete set available as they embark on a long read. These signposts are also supported by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's *Into Literature* curriculum that New Haven Public Schools recently began using for grades 1-6 and has secured as a resource for grades 7-8. Thus, for some seventh graders, using these signposts will be activating prior knowledge, while for others, this content will be new.

### **Reading Nonfiction**

This unit will introduce students to the reading stance that Beers and Probst outline in the book *Reading Nonfiction*. Specifically, it will encourage students to approach nonfiction text by using the questions: 1) "What surprised you?"<sup>2</sup> 2) "What changed, challenged, or confirmed what you already knew?"<sup>3</sup> The first question helps to encourage curiosity because it invites students to notice what stands out to them in a text. It also emphasizes the opportunity to be impressed and to feel appreciation, and even awe. These emotions open our minds and motivate us to learn. The second question encourages students to connect ideas presented in the text to prior knowledge and opinions, and to use new information to think critically about their beliefs. This represents the application of curiosity and how pursuing new information helps us to broaden our knowledge and awareness.

The unit also will support students by previewing nonfiction readings with background knowledge. Research shows that background knowledge and successful reading have a cyclical relationship: the background knowledge helps students interpret text, which then extends students' background knowledge. On the *Science of Reading* podcast, Reid Smith, a teacher and researcher with the La Trobe Science of Language and Reading Lab in Australia described background knowledge as information that readers bring to the act of reading. He explained, "It can also be knowledge and experiences, and other texts that a reader might have read, that they can overlay with their current reading to make meaning of the text that they're reading at the moment."<sup>4</sup> This unit will scaffold reading of nonfiction texts with videos, vocabulary, and visual previews to promote student success with the texts.

### **Reading Like a Writer**

The reading strategies described above support close reading. Students will use these strategies to notice how writers build stories, and then use the texts to draft a fairy tale, myth or fable of their own. Harnessing the power of narrative to craft stories that are important to them will increase the relevance of the learning for students. Making their own choices relating to character, plot, setting, and theme will help students better understand how these elements fit together as they read and interpret other stories.

## Part 1: The Origin of Story

---

In this section, students will focus on the essential questions: 1) Why do humans need story? 2) How are stories built? Students will use texts and videos to explore the act of storytelling as part of what makes us human, having foundations in our social interactions and even in human biology. Students will first explore historical milestones in storytelling and will then look at what neuroscientists say about how stories engage our brains. This section will take about one week, using 90-minute class blocks.

Scholars cannot pinpoint an exact year when storytelling emerged, but they believe it to be soon after humans developed capacity for language. The Lascaux and Chauvet caves in southwestern France are famous for early evidence of storytelling, which takes the form of horses, bison, lions, mammoths, and deer that were painted on the cave walls around 30,000 years ago. In recent years, a series of warty pigs painted on cave walls in Indonesia have been dated to at least 45,000 years ago. Based on the positions and sequencing of the images in Lascaux and Chauvet, archaeologists believe these animals would have given the illusion of being in motion when viewed in the flickering of firelight—a prehistoric form of animation. Scholars view these paintings as visual stories, which likely were viewed by their communities alongside oral storytelling traditions.

More recent history demonstrates the presence of extensive oral storytelling in pre-literate societies. The earliest known written stories are widely acknowledged to have first been passed down by spoken word for generations. This applies to the earliest known epics, including: *Gilgamesh*, chiseled into clay tablets in Mesopotamia around 2000 BCE; Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, scribed onto papyrus scrolls in Greece around 700 BCE; and the Mayan *Popol Vuh*, which was first written down in the Mayan language of K'iche in the 1500s and was later written in Spanish in the 1800s. This heritage of oral storytelling applies to most traditional myths, fables, fairy tales, folk tales, and creation stories. The longevity of oral storytelling has been documented through stories from societies that did not use writing until the 1800s. The Klamath people of Oregon, for example, tell a story relating to the formation of Crater Lake, which geologists can date to a volcanic explosion that occurred around 7,600 years ago. Students can relate to oral storytelling within their own lives today, whether it be a family story told by a beloved grandparent, or the tale a middle-school mishap that travels by word-of-mouth at lightning speed.

While the process of storytelling is enduring, it has been changed throughout time by various human inventions. Writing itself was independently invented multiple times, including in cuneiform in Sumer (modern-day Iraq) by 3100 BCE; in characters carved into oracle bones in China by around 2000 BCE, and in symbols found in Mesoamerica by around 1000 BCE. Written word was the first in a series of inventions that changed how stories traveled across time and space. This phenomenon continued with the invention of Gutenberg's moveable-type printing press in 1440, the rise of radio and film in the early 1900s, and the more recent internet and social media revolution. Today stories are even being told through such formats as video games! Each of these developments has expanded the audience for stories and the formats in which they are told.

It is valuable for students to recognize that writing, movies, and digital storytelling are not givens, but rather are the result of human ingenuity being applied to the question: How can we communicate effectively to different audiences and for different purposes? Even as technology changes and new storytelling formats have been added, the need to be able to process and generate text has not become obsolete. A meme, for example, may entertain audiences and promote social commentary. But it will not provide doctors with the depth of information needed to treat patients. Exploring these differences can reinforce the relevance for

students of becoming strong readers and writers of stories themselves.

In recent years, neuroscience research has documented that human brains have a biological response, as well as a social response, to narrative stories. Scientists have recorded that reading, listening to, and viewing stories activate multiple sections of the brain, stimulating the brain to make connections between sensory input, emotions, and information. Researchers have linked these brain responses to higher social awareness, memory, and learning. A well-known psychology experiment from the 1940s, called the Heider-Simmel illusion, demonstrated that the desire for story is so hard-wired into our brains that people will project a sense of narrative even when one is not necessarily present. In this experiment, scientists showed viewers a 1-minute stop-motion video in which geometric shapes move around. When asked to describe what they had just seen, participants did not say they had watched several triangles and circles moving around. Instead, they described seeing a scene unfold, as if the geometric shapes represented characters in a story.

Students are particularly interested in content that helps them understand themselves. Thus, exploring how their brains work increases the relevance of our exploration of narrative. The activities in this unit are an opportunity for students to look at the essential questions about story from historical, scientific, and literary perspectives. It's hoped that this framing would encourage students to be more curious and more reflective about their own reaction to various stories. As the school year continues, teachers can refer back to these concepts to support making meaning from stories and to also use narrative to promote social awareness and a healthy learning community.

### **Activity 1: Sparking Curiosity**

This lesson will be used to frame the unit. Students will start with an anticipation guide as a bellringer. They will circle a response for the following prompts: 1) Words are required to tell story. True or False. 2) Without ever being written down, spoken stories have been passed from one generation to the next for how long? a. 500 years b. 3,000 years c. 7,000 years. 3) The fairy tale commonly known as Cinderella has more than 500 different versions. True or False. Students will also write one or two complete sentences in response to each of these questions: 1) What is a story? 2) Who tells stories and why? 3) Why do people respond to stories? Students will save this anticipation guide in their notebooks to refer to later as we go through the unit.

After this opening, I will introduce the students to the essential questions of our Storytelling unit. As a whole group, we will read a brief article about the history of storytelling that references prehistoric cave painting, oral storytelling, and early epics. With this article, I will model annotating and using the Beers and Probst stance of asking "What surprises me?" as a lens to read nonfiction. At the end of the article, we will together generate a list of facts in the following categories: 1) Wow! Fact, 2) Useful Fact, 3) Most Important Fact, 4) Important Dates. As part of this conversation, I will model—and invite students to practice—the process of putting facts from an article into their own words.

### **Activity 2: Storytelling Across Time**

This lesson will be spread across multiple class periods. It will start with a bellringer asking students to freewrite based on the following prompt: Remember a story (not a video) that was told or read to you when you were a young child and which you loved hearing again and again. What was the story? Who told or read it to you? Why did you love this story so much? Students will be invited to share their responses with a peer and then the whole class. A bellringer for another day would be to ask students to brainstorm with a partner and write down as many story genres as they can think of (i.e. mystery, science fiction, etc.), and to circle several that they enjoy.

The main activity of this lesson is for the class to work together to create a shared reference resource. Together, we will create a “Timeline of Milestones in Storytelling.” Students will have a choice of topics relating to storytelling throughout history, and each student will then annotate an article and make a slide with their own fact list. The activity on this day repeats the steps of the previous day, but with students working independently. Topics will include: prehistoric cave art, oral storytelling, invention of writing, earliest written stories, myths and fables, the Cinderella fairy tale, invention of the Gutenberg press, invention of the novel, invention of radio and film. The articles will offer different reading levels, and video options will be available for learners as needed. The databases that are available to teachers through digital library sites such as Britannica School and Gale in Context are good sources for articles on the specific topics. In addition to the key facts, students should add a relevant image to their slide. After students complete their slides, they will share them with a peer.

Next, students will present their work to the class. As we move through the presentations, we will pause as needed for students to record key ideas in their notebooks. One notebook page will be divided into three columns, labeled “Vocabulary,” “Definition,” and “Examples.” We will cover the following academic vocabulary: oral storytelling, epic, folk tale, fable, myth, fairy tale, novel. Students will leave room in their notebooks to continue adding to this list of academic vocabulary about story formats throughout the year. After students present the relevant slide, I will project a definition for students to write down, and draw connections between it and the student-generated content. On another page in their notebook, students will take notes on inventions. On this page, the three columns will be labeled “Invention,” “Dates used,” and “Impact on Storytelling.” Topics covered on this page will be painting/drawing, writing, printing press, radio, movies, internet, and social media. Although information for most of these inventions will come from the student presentations, I will provide the information for the last two items. During or after the presentations, students will write down three facts that surprised them from any slide that was not their own. Later, the completed slide deck will be posted in the digital classroom space to be an ongoing resource for students; slides may also be printed to display to make a visual timeline in the classroom.

After the presentations, students will debrief in small groups. They will discuss what surprised them about storytelling, and why that information was a surprise. Students will brainstorm together to list in their notebooks as many places as they can think of where they hear and see stories today. Students will report out from their small groups to generate a class list on this topic. Students will continue working together to fill in a Venn diagram comparing similarities and differences among storytelling today and storytelling in the past. Students will then report out.

### **Activity 3: Components of Narrative**

As a bellringer, students will respond to the following prompt in their notebook: Review the list of stories we have discussed, and your brainstorming about modern stories. Reflecting on all the types of stories that people have told, *why* do you think people tell stories? Students will share their response with a peer, and then share out for a whole group discussion. Key ideas that relate to the previous readings and discussions would be: to share information, to connect with other people, to be creative, to cultivate empathy, to persuade people, to teach values, to build a shared sense of culture, to explain things, and to explore “what if?”

Students then will compare three types of stories—told in different formats, from different eras and cultures—to identify the main components of narrative. Students will be given two questions to guide thinking as we review these stories: 1) What is the purpose of this story? 2) What are the building blocks of a narrative

story? In their notebooks, on the academic vocabulary list begun above, students will add a definition for “narrative.” Because these are middle schoolers, they may bring prior knowledge to this discussion. Before reviewing the stories, I’ll invite them to name any components they already know that a story has to have. Character and plot/conflict are the most likely answers for students to have at the ready. This would reinforce that the most essential elements of a story are that it is about someone/something and that something happens. We will then review the definition of fable from our notebooks, and students will read to themselves a short fable, attributed to Aesop in Greece, around 600 BCE. We will review the definition of an epic story, and will then watch a short video describing the *Popol Vuh*, a Mayan creation story that was passed down for centuries before being eventually written down in a Mayan language in the 1500s, and then translated by Spanish colonizers in the 1800s. We will also view a short, animated video. After the reading and viewing, students will work in small groups to complete a graphic organizer to describe the audience and purpose of these stories and to identify the characters, plot/conflict, setting, and theme of each story.

Drawing on the information from the graphic organizer, we will as a class write a RACES-model paragraph to answer one of the questions that students encountered at the start of the unit: What is a story? The RACES acronym stands for: Restate the question, Answer the question, Cite Evidence or Examples, and Sum it up. I will model writing the paragraph for the whole group and invite student contributions. Students can copy down our group paragraph, or write their own, into their notebook and must label the different parts of the paragraph.

#### **Activity 4: Narrative and Neuroscience**

As a bellringer, students will respond to the following prompt in their notebook: We have been talking about how stories relate to human culture because we use stories to build communities of shared ideas, perspectives, and values. Do human bodies need stories to be healthy, just like we need oxygen to breathe and food for energy? Explain your answer.

The main activity will start by watching a video of the Heider-Simmel illusion. After the video, students will be asked to write down a short description of what they saw. Students will be invited to share. I’ll explain that although the video is a stop motion video of several geometric shapes moving around, when most people view the video, they ascribe a narrative story to be happening. Why? Because human brains are wired to look for and interpret stories. I will show students diagrams illustrating how reading and engaging with stories stimulates different parts of the brain, helping us to process information and build personal and social connections. I will also review key vocabulary that will help students be successful with the article we will read. We will review procedures for annotating nonfiction text, particularly reading with the guiding question of “What surprised you?” In addition, I will invite students to add another stance, with the question of, “What changed, challenged, or confirmed what you already knew?” Students will read an article and complete a graphic organizer to demonstrate their understanding. In addition to identifying the four facts as done in the previous articles, students will respond to prompts about what changed, challenged, or confirmed what they already knew. After completing their graphic organizers, students can share their responses with peers.

#### **Activity 5: Summing it Up**

In this lesson, students will circle back to the anticipation guide from the first day. Based on what they have learned, would they answer the short questions any differently? Students previously wrote one or two sentences in response to each of these questions: 1) What is a story? 2) Who tells stories and why? 3) Why do people respond to stories? For the first of these, we previously wrote a RACES paragraph as a group. Using that model, now students will write a RACECES (the acronym is extended to reflect two pieces of evidence)



paragraph for the second question. Sentence stems will be provided to all students, but students will not be required to use them. Students should cite and explain at least two pieces of evidence in this paragraph. Students can draw ideas for their response from their own notes about the articles they have read, from responses to the bellringers in their notebooks, or from the class Timeline of Milestones in Storytelling, which will be available in students' digital classroom and posted in the classroom. This is an opportunity to reinforce for students that we work together to build knowledge and that everyone's contributions to the class product (i.e. the Timeline) are seen and valued.

After writing this paragraph, students will swap with a peer. Each student will review the paragraph against a RACECES rubric (diagram below) to confirm that it has all the parts. Each student will also be asked to offer a specific compliment and a specific suggestion for improvement to their partner. After this exchange, students will revise this first paragraph and then go on to write a second RACECES paragraph in response to the third question from the anticipation guide.

To close out this section of the unit, students will freewrite in response to the following prompt: Describe how stories are relevant in your life. Where do you encounter stories? Which stories do you enjoy the most? What do you learn from stories? How do you use stories to communicate with other people? This task may be assigned as homework or may be done as a bellringer, depending on timing.

Figure 1. RACECES Rubric

This rubric can be used for scoring by students and teachers.

|                                 | <b>4 - Goal</b>   | <b>3 - Proficient</b><br>(grade level)   | <b>2 - Approaching</b>   | <b>1 - Below</b>   |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Restate</b>                  | Restated the question completely with specific language. The reader knows what to expect.   | Restated almost all or part of the question  | Attempted to restate the question, but was unsuccessful                          | Did not restate the question at all                          |
| <b>Answer</b>                   | Answered all parts of the question accurately. The response shows that the writer knows what is being asked.  | Answered all parts of the question, with some accuracy.  | Missed part of the question  | Did not answer the question                                  |
| <b>Cite</b>                     | Properly cited <b>specific</b> evidence from the text that <b>directly supports</b> the answer  | Cited <b>weak</b> evidence that is related to the answer   | Evidence is not related to the text, or is inaccurate, or is not properly cited. | Did not use evidence in response                             |
| <b>Explain</b>                  | Clearly explained <b>why</b> the evidence is relevant to the question. The writer uses information that is both inferred or explicitly stated to strongly support their thinking. | Explanation demonstrates some relevance to the question. The writer uses information that is inferred or explicitly stated to strongly support their thinking. | Explanation is not clearly stated, not strongly relevant to the question.        | No connection between the evidence and the text.             |
| <b>Cite</b>                     | Properly cited <b>specific</b> evidence from the text that <b>directly supports</b> the answer  | Cited <b>weak</b> evidence that is related to the answer   | Evidence is not related to the text, or is inaccurate, or is not properly cited. | Did not use evidence in response                             |
| <b>Explain</b>                  | Clearly explained <b>why</b> the evidence is relevant to the question. The writer uses information that is both inferred or explicitly stated to strongly support their thinking. | Explanation demonstrates some relevance to the question. The writer uses information that is inferred or explicitly stated to strongly support their thinking. | Explanation is not clearly stated, not strongly relevant to the question.        | No connection between the evidence and the text.             |
| <b>Sum it Up (&amp; Expand)</b> | Effectively restates the big idea and makes broader connections to the question.  | Effectively restates the big idea, but did not make broader connections to the question  | Some evidence of restating or making a broader connection.                       | Little evidence of restating or making a broader connection. |
| <b>Conventions</b>              | Writing overall demonstrates complete sentences, grade level punctuation, mechanics, and spelling.  | Writing shows some errors in conventions.  | Writing shows many errors in conventions.  | 10.5   |

## Part 2: How enduring stories are built

---

During this section, students will focus on the essential questions of 1) How are stories built? 2) Why are some stories told and retold again and again? 3) Why do stories change? Students will read and analyze the Icarus myth, followed by reading and comparing multiple versions of Cinderella. Students will analyze the story elements of character, conflict/plot, setting, and theme. When making annotations, they will focus on the *Notice and Note* signposts called Words of Wisdom and Again and Again. This section will take about one week, using 90-minute class blocks.

With so many stories being told in so many ways over the years, archetypes have developed for characters and plots. This reflects the qualities of a shared human experience that transcends culture and time. The *Icarus* myth, for example, illustrates a variety of elements that appear repeatedly in stories: a loving parent, an exuberant youth, a dramatic escape, the thrill of invention, and the despair of loss. It also incorporates several fundamental literary conflicts: person vs. self, person vs. nature, and person vs. technology. Although the details may change significantly, people in any culture and in any era would recognize the basic needs and emotions reflected in this tale. Icarus is memorable for the dramatic way in which he sailed too close to the sun, many readers can relate to the symbolism of his act of going for it, but realizing too late that he had gone too far. By the age of twelve, many middle schoolers already have experiences of their own that fit this metaphor, even if the consequences were not so dire. As a result, the story of Icarus has been retold and alluded to in countless stories, songs, paintings and poems. It even features prominently in several video games and is the source of a colloquial saying, “don’t fly too close to the sun.” These factors make Icarus a strong choice to examine when exploring the essential questions listed above.

Similarly, *Cinderella* is one of the most well-known fairy tales in the Western canon, with more than 500 different versions documented from around the world. This story is the inspiration for a Russian-composed ballet, a Broadway musical and many films, including the 1950 animation and ensuing “Disney princess” franchise that helped to make the Walt Disney Company a multinational giant. The Disney version of Cinderella—who is cherished by woodland critters and rides to the ball in a bedazzled pumpkin—draws most heavily from the version written by French author Charles Perrault around 1700. Around a century later, the Grimm brothers also published a widely known version in which the protagonist is called Ashputtle and receives help from a magic tree. An earlier version of the story, however, had already emerged in China by the 9<sup>th</sup> century in which fish bones play the role of the fairy godmother. Central to all Cinderella stories is the archetype of the underdog who overcomes injustice to receive her true rewards. “A real Cinderella story” has become a colloquial phrase in English to describe someone with a rags-to-riches triumph. While this thread of the story remains consistent, the varied settings and details of the retellings offer insight into different perspectives and priorities.

In addition to being good case studies for the relationship between characters’ actions and a story’s theme, both of these stories are classic examples of plot structure. Many textbooks present students with a “plot mountain” that divides a story into five phases: 1) exposition to introduce characters and the story problem, 2) rising action to develop the conflict, 3) the climax as the scene of most dramatic change, 4) falling action, which represents the repercussions of the climax, and 5) resolution. This simplified schematic helps students to track and talk about where characters are at in the journey of the story. In very short stories, each phase may be represented by a single scene. In longer stories, however, these phases—except for the climax—often represent multiple scenes. When examining the plot in *Icarus* and *Cinderella*, I will supplement the plot

mountain by sharing with students how I view plot as an author, using “turning points” to distinguish between the major phases a story. Turning points are moments when something changes in a story so fundamentally that the characters can never go back. The climax is a turning point, but it is not the only one. The climax of Cinderella’s story is when she and the prince are brought together through his search with the shoe—which results in her promptly being whisked away from hardship to a new life in the palace. That moment could not have happened, however, without an earlier scene—when Cinderella makes a plan to attend the ball and as a result alters the trajectory of her story. Helping students recognize specific scenes as turning points will give them another tool to track character growth and the development of story meaning and themes. Turning points can be layered onto the plot mountain schematic easily, as long as the peak of the mountain is far enough over to the right to represent where the climax actually occurs in a story. (Some visuals incorrectly show the climax of the story being at the center of the plot mountain, with the exposition and rising action taking up as much visual space as the falling action and resolution).

An excellent explanation of turning points is available in Eve Heidi Bine-Stock’s *How to Write a Children’s Picture Book, Volume 1: Structure*. I will use the phrase “turning point” instead of her phrase, “plot twist,” because I want students to focus on these scenes as key moments of change for the characters. Each story opens with an inciting incident that sets the story problem in motion. In the plot mountain scheme, this information is part of the exposition. Next comes the first major action that propels the protagonist forward to work on the story problem. This turning point ends the exposition and kicks off the rising action of the plot mountain. The protagonist will then make multiple attempts to solve their story problem, each of which will fail. Around the middle of the story is a turning point called the “midpoint.” Here, something dramatic happens; the protagonist fails spectacularly, grows, and emerges with new fortitude to try again. In *Cinderella* this scene occurs right after her family leaves for the ball. Exactly what happens at that moment to cause the personal growth depends on how the story is being retold. But the end result every time is that this protagonist decides for herself she is going to the ball. Once Cinderella chooses to disobey her stepmother and pursue her own fortune, she has changed herself and her story. Another turning point occurs shortly before the climax, launching the final act of a story. In *Cinderella* this occurs is when her shoe is left behind, which prompts the prince to set out on his search. The climax, falling action, and resolution all occur within the third act of the story.

Picture books are a convenient format to examine these turning points in action because they are so concise. The traditional physical parameters of printing presses once meant that picture books were most commonly produced with thirty-two pages, so the storyboard in Figure 1 shows thirty-two pages with the placement of the key turning points and the five corresponding phases of the plot mountain. This diagram illustrates that turning points can generally be found at about the one-quarter, one-half, and three-quarter points in a story, and the climax occurs close to the end of the story. Understanding this can help students know where to look in a story to find the most dramatic moments of conflict and character development, which is relevant for interpreting stories and for identifying text evidence. Students can also use this information to plan out their own stories.

Although the example given here highlights the picture book genre, this structure is as applicable as the plot mountain for analyzing longer texts, novels, movies, and other genres of storytelling. This structure has a balance and rhythm that seems to be generally satisfying to human beings. We instinctively relate to the experience of a protagonist trying and failing multiple times—often in ways that feel embarrassing and prompt personal reflection and growth—before achieving their goal. If a character achieves their goal too easily, then a story is boring because it had no real struggle. If a character struggles without ever making progress, then readers get bored or frustrated. In this way, our exploration of plot reinforces the previously discussed

connections that people feel when engaging with stories.

Figure 2. Plot structure on a common picture book storyboard

Except for page 1, each box below represents a double-page spread in a thirty-two paged book.

|  |  |                 |   |   |
|--|--|-----------------|---|---|
| <p>Pg 1 <b>Opening</b></p> <p>Act 1 introduces the character, setting, and story problem.</p>              | <p>Pg 2-3</p>  | <p>Pg 4-5</p>   | <p>Pg 6-7 <b>Turning Point #1</b></p> <p>Something dramatic happens that changes everything, and the protagonist starts actively trying to solve the story problem.</p> | <p><b>Plot Mountain stages</b></p> <p>Act 1 = Exposition</p>  |
| <p>Pg 8-9</p> <p>Act 2 shows the main character making several attempts to solve problem, but failing.</p> | <p>Pg 10-11</p>  | <p>Pg 12-13</p> | <p>Pg 14-15</p> <p><b>Turning Point #2: Midpoint</b></p> <p>Something dramatic happens, motivating the protagonist to take a new approach.</p>                          | <p>Act 2 = Rising Action</p>                                  |
| <p>Pg 16-17</p>  | <p>Pg 18-19</p>  | <p>Pg 20-21</p> | <p>Pg 22-23</p> <p><b>Turning Point #3</b></p> <p>Something dramatic happens <u>that changes</u> everything.</p>  |   |
| <p>Pg 24-25</p> <p>Act 3: The main character rallies for one more attempt.</p>                             | <p>Pg 26-27</p> <p><b>Turning Point #4: Climax</b></p> | <p>Pg 28-29</p> | <p>Pg 30-31</p> <p><b>Resolution</b></p> <p>Problem is solved. Hooray!</p>  | <p>Act 3 includes climax, falling action, and resolution.</p> |

### Activity 1 - Character and theme in Icarus

This lesson will begin with a bellringer, asking students to respond to the prompt: What makes a good story? For the main activity, students will read and interpret the story of *Icarus*. On our timeline of storytelling milestones, we will note that this myth was first written down by the Roman poet Ovid, around the dividing line between BCE and CE. When annotating the story, students will highlight the signposts Words of the Wiser and Again and Again. We will identify a theme for the story based on the choices characters make and the consequences they experience. We will add a definition for the word “allusion” to students’ notebooks and will explore how this story has been referenced in paintings, poems, and video games. Students will work in small groups to brainstorm why they believe this story has been retold so often and how they think this theme relates to their lives today. Students will freewrite in their journal relating to these questions. Resources are widely available for more detail about exploring *Icarus*, including a lesson plan in the HMH *Into Literature* curriculum for seventh grade.

## Activity 2 - Character and theme in Cinderella

This lesson will begin with a bellringer, asking students to respond to the prompt: If someone was retelling the Cinderella story, what would be the most important parts for them to have in the story? Make a list below. (examples: a character who..., a shoe that..., etc. This will lead into a class conversation about what students remember about the Cinderella story and where they have seen it. For the main activity, students will read the Grimm Brothers' version, called *Ashputtle*. We will read at least some of the story aloud in a reader's theater format with students reading the words of the narrator, protagonist, and other characters. As with the previous story, we will identify themes for the story based on the choices and consequences characters face. We will also identify what values the story seems to represent. Students will work in small groups to discuss why they believe this story has been retold so often and how they think it relates to the world today. Students will complete a graphic organizer to highlight themes and supporting text evidence from this story.

## Activity 3 - Analyzing Plot

As a bellringer for this lesson, students will be shown a scrambled set of five images representing key moments in the life of a butterfly. The images will show: 1) an egg on a leaf, 2) a caterpillar having just come out of its egg, 3) a chrysalis, 4) a butterfly with crumpled wings that just came out of the chrysalis, 5) a butterfly flying. Students will be asked to number the images in the order they occur. After students work individually, two students will be invited up to order two sets of the images on the board.

This will lead into a mini-lesson about the turning points of a plot being moments in a story when everything changes. Students will receive a diagram of the plot mountain and be invited to fill in the academic language associated with each phase. For some seventh-grade students, this will activate prior knowledge from previous years. On our timeline of storytelling milestones, we will mark down that the ancient Greek Aristotle wrote about plot around 300 BCE, and the plot mountain diagram comes from a German novelist in the 1800s. We will then return to the caterpillar's story to place the turning points onto the same diagram. The egg being laid on a leaf is the inciting incident that begins this caterpillar's quest to become a butterfly. The caterpillar emerging from the egg is first turning point, which kicks off the rising action of the story. This metaphor reinforces the significance of turning points for students because a caterpillar can't go back into its egg even if it wanted to. In an effort to become a butterfly, the caterpillar eats and eats and grows and grows. By the middle of the story, however, it has failed to become a butterfly. Eating and growing is not enough, and the caterpillar needs to try a new strategy. At the mid-point (halfway through the rising action), the caterpillar recommits to its goal in another dramatic turning point: it sheds its skin to form a chrysalis. Although not visible to us, a lot of growth and change is happening inside that chrysalis. The next turning point occurs when the animal emerges from its chrysalis. This moment is toward the end of the rising action and prompts the third and final act of the story. Although the animal has completed its transformation into a butterfly, its story is unresolved. The climax of the story is when the animal is at its most vulnerable—having emerged from the chrysalis, but with its wings crumpled and needing time to adjust to this new state of being. At last, the resolution comes when the butterfly is fully stretched out and successfully flies away.

In class, students will receive a graphic organizer with a table that lists the turning points horizontally and has room for four stories vertically. Together, we will revisit *Icarus* and look for the specific scenes that represent the turning points. I will model and we will together complete the story line for *Icarus*. Students will then work in pairs or small groups to identify and document the turning points for *Cinderella*. To illustrate that this model applies to other story formats, we will watch a short animation, after which students will work together to identify the plot turning points.

## Activity 4 - Cinderella revisited

In this activity, students will use picture books as mentor texts to compare different retellings of *Cinderella*. I will preview the different versions by reading selections aloud and showing artwork to the class. Although the picture books will remain available for students to view, each student will have their own version of the text typed out for reading and annotating. Videos of the complete stories being read aloud are also available online to support differentiation as needed. A list of stories planned for use is included in the Student and Teacher Resource section, and many other options are also available.

As they read, students will annotate for Words of the Wiser, and Again and Again. As with the Grimm brothers' version, students will gather text evidence to support the theme of the story. They will complete the same graphic organizer that was done with the previous story, but noting the differences in the new version. They will also add a line on their plot chart to mark the turning points of the story. Students will complete this work through a combination of individual and partner work. When students have finished reading their stories, they will meet in small groups to compare their findings. In particular, students will compare and contrast the actions of the main character, and look at what values each story is emphasizing. We will look at how these different choices by authors lead to different themes. Why is it important to have stories from different voices? How does changing the setting of the story affect how it is told? Students will write RACECES paragraph responses.

## Part 3: Making Our Own Stories

---

Thus far, students have focused on noticing details to support their interpretation of texts. In this section, students will reorient to apply what they notice to their own writing. They will focus on the essential questions of: 1) How are stories built? 2) Why do stories change? 3) How can I build engaging stories? Students will choose a familiar tale and retell it with their own twist. Perhaps they will tell it from a different perspective or in a different setting. They will reflect on how their changes impact the story's theme. This section is anticipated to take about a week with 90-minute blocks.

Reading like a writer means to read a text with the following questions in mind: 1) How did the writer create this story effect? 2) How can I use words to create a similar effect? Inherent in these questions is an understanding of the audience and purpose of a text. Turning our focus from interpreting stories to writing them turns students into creators. They take pride in expressing themselves and being creative. Creative writing assignments encourage students to be playful with language, which has multiple benefits. Being playful in general involves trying new ideas and taking healthy risks, which can promote community bonding and a growth mindset. Academically, being playful with language can help students expand their knowledge of syntax and diction. This can create a cycle of positive reinforcement as stronger readers become stronger writers, and vice versa. Reading like a writer is also a powerful skill that will serve students far beyond seventh grade. Writing intersects almost every career in some way, beginning with the drafting of resumes and cover letters. In addition, being able to analyze a final product and break it down into smaller components, and then to mimic those components is a valuable life skill for learning in many fields.

### Activity 1: Fractured fairy tales and brainstorming

As a bellringer for this lesson, students will work with a partner to brainstorm a list of fairy tales, fables, or folk tales that they know well. I will introduce the idea of a “fractured” fairy tale by sharing with students part of a book that I wrote, called *The Ugly Duckling Dinosaur*. This retelling of the Hans Christian Anderson tale is set in prehistoric times, with a *T. rex* coming out of the egg, rather than a swan. This twist highlights that birds evolved from dinosaurs. (Dinosaurs hatched out of the same eggs as birds, have many skeletal points in common, and some even had feathers.) I’ll model for students my thinking process as an author in changing the characters, setting and events of the story to develop the twist. The original story opens by describing a farm setting, with a mother duck sitting on her nest, waiting for eggs to hatch. A neighbor duck stops by and chats about the one egg that hasn’t hatched. The opening in my story starts the same way, but set millions of years ago instead of in a farm. As a writer, I’m thinking about how that change of setting makes the story different—what other animals will readers meet? When the young *T. rex* emerges, how does he look, sound, and act differently from the other ducklings? I take this ugly duckling character through a series of events similar to that from Anderson’s story.

Students will then work in small groups to read aloud short scenes that are fractured fairy tale retellings. As they read, students will record on a graphic organizer what the author changed to put a new spin on the story, and what was the impact of that twist on the story’s theme. Students will choose their own fairy tale that they will retell, with their own twist. Short summaries of common fairy tales and lists of possible changes (i.e. different settings, props, character traits) will be available as a resource for students who are struggling to generate ideas. When planning their stories, students should imagine an audience that is their age or younger. Once they have chosen their tale and their twist, they will complete a series of graphic organizers to help them plan out the changes in setting, character, and plot for their tale.

### **Activity 2: Beginning with an “exploded moment”**

As a bellringer, students will answer the question: What elements does a writer need to begin a story? We will review students’ answers, giving examples from any of the stories we have recently read together. Our list will be to introduce 1) a character, 2) a setting, 3) a conflict, and 4) a point of view through which the story will be told. Readers don’t like to be confused, and these are the core things needed for readers to feel grounded in a story. But, how can students create a scene that does all these things? Remember from our earlier reading about how our brains work, that readers like to feel like they are in a story, right alongside the characters. To accomplish this, writers use “exploded moments,” which are scenes in a story that are told with lots of detail, almost as if they are in slow motion. An exploded moment shows what a character hears, sees, thinks, feels, says, and does. This lesson is an adaptation of a lesson plan called *Make a Splash! Using Dramatic Experience to ‘Explode the Moment,’* which is published on [readwritethink.org](http://readwritethink.org) by the National Council for Teachers of English. Together, we will watch a short video scene that shows how the camera zooms in to show an exploded moment on screen. Students will work in pairs to analyze a short scene from one of the texts we previously read, marking the different parts of the exploded moment with markers or colored pencils. Students will then write an exploded moment to be the beginning of their fractured fairy tale. A graphic organizer will be available as needed for students to plan out the different elements. Sentence stems will also be available that can help to introduce characters and settings. Students can also look at the opening of the original story they chose for help. As students finish their scenes, they will share with peers, who will respond to the questions: What did this writer change from the original story? What new ideas does this twist bring into the story? What do you like best about this story? Students will also check their scenes against a rubric and have time to revise.

### Activity 3: Completing the story arc

As students finish their opening scenes, they will use our chart of turning points to plot out the rest of the story. Students will not write complete scenes, but rather a short description of what would happen at the different scenes. Together, the opening scene and the writing of these plot points will represent a completed story arc. Students who write more quickly than others can write an exploded moment for the climax of their story. Students will also have time built in to share their stories with peers. After reaching their final draft, students will write a reflection: What are you most proud of relating to your writing? What was challenging in creating this story, and how did you meet that challenge? What did you learn from writing this story that you will use in the future?

Figure 3. Fractured Fairy Tale Rubric

The story components from this section will be collectively scored with the following rubric.

|  | <b>4 - Goal</b>   | <b>3 - Proficient</b>  | <b>2 - Approaching</b>   | <b>1 - Below</b>   |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Fairy Tale Twist</b>                            | The writer gives the original fairy tale a unique twist that adds significant interest and extra layers of meaning to the story. This twist is well-integrated throughout the story.  | The writer gives the original fairy tale a somewhat unique twist that adds some interest or meaning. The twist is integrated through most of the story.  | The fractured fairy tale is a little bit different from the original tale, but not much.   | No attempt was made to add a new twist to the tale.            |
| <b>Opening scene</b>                               | The story has a well-developed beginning of at least 250 words that introduces the character, setting, story problem, and a clear point of view.                                      | The opening scene is less developed, with at least 175 words. It still introduces the character, setting, story problem, and a clear point of view.      | The opening scene is at least 100 words, and introduces some of the required elements.   | The opening scene is less than 100 words.                      |
| <b>Exploded moment</b><br><b>Think, say, do</b>    | The opening scene presents a specific "exploded moment" in slow motion, showing readers what the main character thinks, says, and does.   | Readers have some idea of what the main character thinks, says, and does.  | The writer is summarizing the story without giving readers a specific "exploded moment" in time.   | Nothing much happens.  |
| <b>Exploded moment</b><br><b>(See, hear, feel)</b> | The opening scene has strong sensory details that help a reader feel they are in the story, right beside the characters. Readers know what the main character sees, hears, and feels. | The opening scene has some sensory details. Readers know generally what the main character sees, hears, and feels, but don't feel immersed in the scene. | The opening scene has a few sensory details, but could use more.   | The opening scene is significantly lacking in sensory details. |
| <b>Plot Chart</b>                                  | All key plot points are clearly described. The plot points reflect the twist in the story. Together, they lead to a logical, satisfying ending.                                       | Most of the plot points are present and relate to the twist in the story. They mostly support a logical, satisfying ending.                              | Several of the plot points are missing. Or the plot points do not relate well to the story twist, or are not well enough developed to support a satisfying ending. | Some work has begun, but the plot is mostly incomplete.        |
| <b>Conventions</b>                                 | Writing overall demonstrates complete sentences, grade level punctuation, mechanics, and spelling.  | Writing shows some errors in conventions.  | Writing shows many errors in conventions.  | Writing does not show that conventions were considered.        |

## Part 4: Magic in Modern Stories

This unit will conclude with students applying their skills to longer stories. In this section, students will focus on the essential questions: 1) How are stories built? 2) What role does magic play in stories? Similar to in the first section of the unit, students will read a nonfiction article that explores the different roles that magic can bring to stories. Students will then choose from a selection of short stories or novel excerpts written by contemporary middle grade authors. The stories will be selected based on their connection to fairy tales or the



presence of magic in the stories and may range from fifteen to fifty pages. The stories listed in the Student and Teacher Resources page are represent a variety of cultural backgrounds, and some are written in ways that include small phrases in Spanish. These stories are a small sampling of what is available, pending student interests. Students will use the six signposts as they take notes on these stories. It is anticipated that this section will take about a week of 90-minute classes.

During this section students will be asked to complete a set of independent performance tasks that will serve as assessments of their learning in the unit.

### **Activity 1: Reflecting on Magic**

The bellringer for this lesson will be for students to respond to the following questions: 1) Do you believe in magic? Y or N. 2) Do you believe in ghosts? Y or N. 3) Do you believe in superstitions? Y or N. 4) Explain why you circled the answers above, giving examples. This will lead into a discussion about why magic is a significant element in so many stories, including fairy tales, fantasy, horror. Students will work in pairs to brainstorm predictions on this topic. Students will then read a nonfiction article on this topic. They should make annotations, remembering the questions: 1) “What surprised you?”<sup>2</sup> 2) “What changed, challenged, or confirmed what you already knew?”

### **Activity 2: Choice Read**

The bellringer can activate prior knowledge by asking students to describe the two signposts we have practiced so far, which are Word of the Wiser and Again and Again. Students will then review the full list of six signposts. Students will choose from a list of stories to read. As they work through the stories, students will complete graphic organizers or record in their notebooks relating to the signposts, character, setting, and theme. Students will also identify allusions and major turning points in the plot and explain how they contribute to the protagonist’s growth. The note-taking strategies will mirror those previously used in this unit, and much of this section will be self-paced. Each day will have designated reading time and also some opportunity to connect with other students who are reading the same story, or to compare different stories. Students will be alerted from the beginning of this work that it will culminate in several assessments, for which they will be able to use their notes.

At the end of this section, students will be assigned the following key performance tasks, which will be collectively graded as an assessment. These tasks will be completed individually, during a specified class time and students can use their notes.

- Students will complete a plot chart relating to their story.
- Students will complete a graphic organizer that lists the names of each of the six signposts. Students will need to identify an example from their choice story for at least four of the signposts. They will record a) a piece of text evidence, b) the page and paragraph #s of the text evidence, c) a short explanation of why this moment in the story matches the signpost.
- Students will write two RACECES paragraphs, using text evidence to explain the theme of the story and to identify what the presences of magic brings to the story.

## Teacher and Student Resources

---

### Resources for Section 1

“Storytelling.” Education. Accessed July 9, 2024.  
<https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/storytelling-x/>.

“The Heider-Simmel Illusion.” YouTube, February 16, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FIEZXMUM2I>.

Stavans, Ilan. “What is the Popol Vuh and why is it ‘The Mayan Bible?’” *Inside Edition*. Episode, January 1, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JG-biN8yun0&t=338s>.

### Resources for Section 2

Hallett, Martin, and Barbara Karasek, eds. “Cinderella.” Essay. In *Folk & Fairy Tales*, Fifth ed., 40–75. Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press, 2018.

Coburn, Jewell Reinhart. *Domitila: A Cinderella tale from the Mexican tradition*. Shen’s Books, 2014.

San Souci, Robert D., and Daniel San Souci. *Sootface: An Ojibwa Indian Tale*. New York: Doubleday Book for Young Readers, 1994.

San Souci, Robert D., J. Brian Pinkney, and Charles Perrault. *Cendrillon: A Caribbean cinderella*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2002.

Louie, Ai-Ling, and Ed Young. *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella story from China*. New York: Puffin Books, 1999.

Mnyandu, Thembani, Desaray Mnyandu, and Shayna Olivier. *Sindi: A Zulu cinderella*. College Park, MD: Zulunomics, LLC, 2023.

### Resources for Section 3

Bardoe, Cheryl, and Doug Kennedy. *The ugly duckling dinosaur: A prehistoric tale*. New York, NY: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2011.

Peterson Ewen, Jan. *Fractured fairy tales for student actors: A collection of contemporary fairy tale scenes*. Chicago, IL: Merriwether Publishing, 2013.

Polega, Victoria, and Audra Roach. “Make a Splash! Using Dramatic Experience to ‘Explode the Moment.’” Read Write Think, NCTE. Accessed July 8, 2024.  
<https://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/make-splash-using-dramatic>.

### Resources for Section 4

Abtahi, Olivia. “Break in the Case of Persephone.” Short story. In *Relit: 16 Latinx Remixes of Classic Stories*, 41–60. Toronto, Canada: Inkyard Press, 2024.

Avi. *Strange happenings: Five tales of transformation*. Boston, Mass: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013.

Ilbanez, Isabel. "Rogue Enchantments." Short story. In *Reclaim the stars: 17 tales across realms & space*, 239-274. New York, NY: Wednesday Books, 2022.

Lin, Grace. *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, choose excerpts. New York, NY: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2019.

Mendez, Jasminne. "Celia's Song." Short story. In *Relit: 16 Latinx Remixes of Classic Stories*, 251-266. Toronto, Canada: Inkyard Press, 2024.

Riggs, Ransom. "Cocobolo." Short story. In *Tales of the Peculiar*, 67-88. New York, NY: Dutton Books, 2016.

Riggs, Ransom. "The Splendid Cannibals." Short story. In *Tales of the Peculiar*, 1-18. New York, NY: Dutton Books, 2016.

## End Notes

---

1. Beers and Probst, in *Notice & Note: Strategies for Close Reading*, 70.
2. Beers and Probst, in *Reading Nonfiction*, 81.
3. Beers and Probst, in *Reading Nonfiction*, 100.
4. Susan Lambert in "Knowledge and comprehension: Never one without the other," in *Science of Reading: The Podcast*, 14:11.

## Bibliography

---

Beers, G. Kylene, and Robert E. Probst. *Reading nonfiction: Notice & note stances, signposts, and strategies*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2016.

Beers, G. Kylene, and Robert E. Probst. *Reading nonfiction: Notice & note stances, signposts, and strategies*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2016.

Bine-Stock, Eve Heidi. *How to write a children's picture book: Structure*. Vol. 1. 3 vols. Sausalito, CA: E & E Publishing, 2004.

Hallett, Martin, and Barbara Karasek, eds. "Cinderella." Essay. In *Folk & Fairy Tales*, Fifth ed., 40-75. Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press, 2018.

Lambert, Susan. "Knowledge and comprehension: Never one without the other with Reid Smith and Pamela Snow." *Science of Reading: The Podcast*. October 11, 2023.  
<https://www.buzzsprout.com/612361/13723584-s8-e1-knowledge-and-comprehension-never-one-without-the-other-with-reid-smith-and-pamela-snow>

Tatar, Maria. *The hard facts of the grimms' fairy tales*, 3-38. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019.

## Appendix on Implementing District Standards

---

RL.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.7.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.7.3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

RI.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.7.3 Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

W.7.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

W.7.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W.7.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

SL.7.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.7.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

---

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2024 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>